

Genetic Engineering: Principles and Methods,
vol 2. J K Setlow & A Hollaender (ed) pp 289
US\$32.50 New York: Plenum Press 1980

Genetic engineering has some recent striking advances to its credit, notably the production of insulin, somatomedin and interferon by the incorporation of human genes into bacterial cultures. The clinical value of these products is now on trial. The papers in this book do not discuss these developments directly but give the technical background, in great detail, for this kind of work. This includes incorporating the desired gene into bacterial plasmids, which are then transferred into bacteria (usually *E. coli*), or into bacteriophage which is then used to infect bacteria, or into hybrids of phage and plasmid called cosmids, or into SV40 virus for incorporation into mammalian cell culture. The uses and advantages of each type of vector are described and a full account given of the cutting enzymes which are now used for the incorporation of genes into such vectors. There are two rather separate chapters: one on the technique of producing monoclonal antibodies, which in turn may be most useful in concentrating the products of genes transferred into bacteria; and the other on the prospects of manipulating the genome of food plants to increase their value.

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The Endometrium. F A Kimball (ed)
pp 350 £15.95 Lancaster: MTP Press 1980

The uterine endometrium is intimately concerned with the process of implantation and development of the fertilized ovum. In addition, as a target tissue of the sex steroids, it is frequently the immediate source of clinical problems when ovarian function is upset. Finally it is not infrequently subject to malignant change. Not surprisingly, therefore, the endometrium has been the object of considerable study in recent years. Its accessibility has, of course, encouraged this.

This book is the proceedings of the eighth Brook Lodge Workshop on Problems in Reproductive Physiology, in which the present state of research on endometrial morphology, the action of steroids on the endometrium, the regulation of uterine enzymes and the role of prostaglandins in the uterus, is outlined. Many of the participants are recognized leaders in their field and the papers are of generally high quality. Clearly there are large areas of interest not covered and the title is therefore a little misleading. However, the conference clearly did well what it set out to do and, for those interested in research into endometrial physiology and dysfunction, these proceedings are very useful

indeed. The papers are a mixture of review and presentation of new data. This means inevitably that the references are generally selective rather than comprehensive. The researcher comparatively new to the field, therefore, needs a particularly critical eye. Nevertheless, he will find much here from which to profit.

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Heart Disease in Infancy

J H Moller & W A Neal pp 502 £23.75
New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts 1981

This book contains 14 chapters totalling 500 pages in a useful-sized book which can easily be carried around for ready consultation. The publishers are to be congratulated on the bold, attractive print and layout. It is a pity it is slightly spoilt by careless final editing which has resulted in figures upside down and spelling mistakes. The book is easy to read and has been based on personal experience, thus covering practical problems in the management of infants with heart disease. The subjects are covered comprehensively and are well referenced. However, the anomalies are divided in a theoretically logical way but it is confusing for the uninitiated. For instance, the chapter on acyanosis with normal pulmonary blood flow includes severe pulmonary stenosis and diminished pulmonary arterial markings (Figure 10.3) and severe pulmonary arterial stenosis so frequently cyanosed in infancy and also aortic arch interruption which when complicated by intracardiac malformations is not only cyanotic but has very different pulmonary physiology.

The illustrations of electrocardiograms, line drawings and most angiocardigrams are excellent and it is refreshing not to find the complex subjects bogged down with modern views on semantic terminology. Less adherence to the entrenched views of van Praagh might make the subjects even clearer. Separate complete coverage of one ventricle hearts, classic transposition, corrected transposition and double outflow right ventricle would improve clarity.

This book would be more stimulating and up-to-date with reference to diffuse congenital cardiovascular disease, the way the heart in congenital heart disease changes with time thus emphasizing the difference between infants and older children, and the late problems after palliation in infancy. However, the book is basically good and can be recommended to newly interested students of paediatric cardiology, adult cardiologists, neonatologists and paediatricians.

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